

Record Kokanee reeled in from Lake Tahoe



Capt. Scott Carey and fisherman Bill Brush with the record-breaking Kokanee. Photo/Tahoe Sport Fishing

By Kathryn Reed

A Nevada City man broke a 40-year-old state record when he went fishing last weekend. Bill Brush reeled in a 5-pound, 2-ounce Kokanee salmon from Lake Tahoe.

Dave Bournique of South Lake set the previous California record of 4 pounds, 13 ounces on Aug. 1, 1973.

The day started slow. They were trolling in the Camp Richardson, Baldwin Beach area when the record breaker clamped on.

“The next thing that freak fish hit the line and we could tell

he was on to something the way the fish was banging on that rod," Capt. Scott Carey told *Lake Tahoe News*. "When it hit the deck I knew we had (the record)."

Kokanee lose weight when pulled from the water so it was imperative to get to an official scale as soon as possible. It's also been recorded with California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The 45-year-old Carey has been fishing Lake Tahoe half his life and July 20 was the first record where he was the skipper. He said he didn't think it was going to happen.

"I tell everyone if you can catch half the fish that hit the line, you had a good day," Carey, who works for Tahoe Sport Fishing based in South Lake Tahoe, said.

When the fish surfaced, the deck hand went for the Kokanee scooper. Then Carey told him to get the big scoop. In one swift motion the fish was on the boat.

"He played the fish perfectly," Carey said of Brush.

A long line of 150 was cast which went to a depth of about 67 feet. They used a flasher set-up called a double whammy that looks like a wedding ring. The little lure is on a 6-pound line.

Corn is placed on the tip of the lure because it resembles daphnia, a form of plankton that no longer exists in Lake Tahoe.

"That's why we don't have big Kokanee here like we did in the '70s," John Shearer, who owns Tahoe Sport Fishing, said of the daphnia.

Now through September is the best time to fish for Kokanee at Lake Tahoe – before they begin to spawn.

Shearer said the record-breaker is a "beautiful fish."

It's sitting in a cooler at Carey's house and will eventually be mounted. Brush told Carey he wanted the captain to be the keeper of record-breaking Kokanee.